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February 23, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

Without delay or ambiguity, I urge you to repudiate the tactics employed by USA Next and to restore civility and honor to the on-going Social Security dialogue.

USA Next, led by former Reagan and Bush official Charlie Jarvis, has deputized itself to engage the AARP in 'hand-to-hand combat' during the ongoing Social Security debate. During this process the organization has aligned itself with, and retained the services of, the same consultants and attack artists that spearheaded the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth advertising campaign last year – an effort which was funded, at least in part, by your supporters. Time and external scrutiny revealed the Swift Boat campaign to lack both accuracy and honorable intentions.


Mr. President, Social Security is a time-honored and time-tested safety net for millions for American families. Talks of altering this safety net should only follow respectable, honorable dialogue between all interested parties – particularly, the American people. Deploying mercenaries to smear opponents of your plan is beneath the dignity of the American people and not an honorable tactic during this American conversation.

Just this week, USA Next used my state's largest newspaper to launch a broadside against the AARP, charging the organization with "lying to the public" on the issue of Social Security. Worse yet is USA Next's incendiary advertisement which implies that the AARP's agenda includes denouncing American servicemen and women and supporting gay marriage. The motive for USA Next's irresponsible use of such hot button issues is not difficult to decipher – if you can't attack the message, attack the messenger – no matter how dishonest and off base those attacks become.

Mr. President, I need not remind you that the AARP's support of your prescription drug plan was crucial to its passage. While I disagreed with your plan and the AARP's decision to endorse it, you found the AARP to be an honorable organization and welcomed their support. While our views on Social Security differ, I hope you will join me in standing with the AARP and denouncing USA Next's incendiary tactics.

Advertisements such as the one described above – consistent in tone with the discredited Swift Boat ads – have absolutely no place in the Social Security debate. I urge you, in no uncertain terms, to repudiate USA Next and these tactics and to call for a civil dialogue at this critical crossroads for Social Security.

Sincerely,



JON S. CORZINE
United States Senator